

The Many Blessings of the Ten Days of Dhul Ḥijja



Once more a period of divine blessing has dawned upon us, bringing with it its zephyrs of divine mercy and opportunity. For truly, it is not that one sacred season of devotion ends, except that another opportunity for attaining God’s forgiveness, bounty, and self-purification begins. In these cycles of sacred times, we find the heavenly gift of a renewed chance to replenish our souls and seek God’s reward and proximity.

Among the reports transmitted regarding the sanctity of the first ten days of Dhul Ḥijja, the following has been related on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “There are no days in which [good] actions are superior than in these days.” It was asked, “Not even fighting for the sake of God?” He replied, “Not even fighting for the sake of God, except that a person sets out with his life and his wealth and returns with neither.”¹

On the authority of Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه, the Messenger of God صلى الله عليه وسلم said: “There are no days more beloved to God that He be worshipped in them than the ten days of Dhul Ḥijja. Each day of fasting in it is equivalent to the fast of an entire year. And each night standing in prayer is equivalent to standing in prayer on the Night of Power (*Laylat al-Qadr*).”²

Also due to the stature and merits of these days, God swore by them when He said: “By the Dawn. And by the ten nights [*al-Fajr*: 1-2],” and in them, He bestowed many of His bounties on His Prophets. Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه relates that in the ten days of Dhul Ḥijja, God accepted the repentance of Prophet Adam عليه السلام, and in it Prophet Ibrāhīm عليه السلام became the intimate friend (*khalīl*) of God “...God

¹ *Musnad al-Imam Aḥmad*: vol.1/p.346.

² *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*: vol.iii/*Kitāb al-ṣawm* 6, *bāb* 52:hadith 758.

took Ibrahīm as His intimate friend [*al-Nisāʾ*: 125].” Hence, he submitted his wealth to the two noble guests (i.e. the angels sent to the people of Lūṭ [*Hūd*: 69-79]), his soul to the flames, his son to sacrifice, and his heart to the Most-Merciful One (*al-Raḥmān*). In it the Prophet Mūsā ﷺ was also honored with the following call, “[God] said: ‘O Mūsā, I have chosen you over the people with My



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For this reason, it is encouraged for one to strive to worship and perform good deeds during these days; including acts such as fasting, prayer, remembrance (*dhikr*), visiting the sick,


messages and My words [to you]. So take what I have given you and be among the grateful’ [*al-Aʿrāf*: 144],” and Prophet Dāwūd was granted forgiveness, “So We forgave him that; and indeed, for him is nearness to Us and a good place of return [*Ṣād*: 25].”


It is said that the chief of all the months is Ramaḍān and the most sanctified of the sacred months (*ashhur al-ḥurum*) is Dhul Ḥijja and the most beloved days of this month to God is the first ten. Good works in them are multiplied. It is also said that whoever honors these ten days, God honors him with ten bounties: blessing in his life, increase in his wealth, protection of his family, atonement for his sins, multiplication of his good deeds, ease in his last days of life, light for his darkness, weight on his scale, salvation from descending [into Hellfire], and ascension into [Heaven].

It is reported that al-Awzaʿī ﷺ said: “It has reached me that good works in the ten days have the worth of fighting for the sake of God. [Nobody] fasts its day and worships during its night, except that God

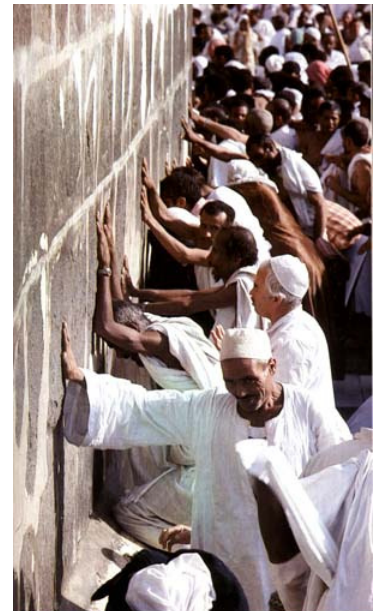
records for him [the reward of] martyrdom for




showing kindness to orphans, attending gatherings of knowledge, and turning one's focus towards God. It is also reported that 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and Ibn 'Abbās  used to go out to the marketplace and exalt God through saying *takbīr* and that the people used to join them in their exaltation of God. Among the distinct days of these ten, is the eighth of Dhul Ḥijja known as the Day of "Watering" (*yawm al-tarwiya*) because on this day the pilgrims in Mecca are given drink and they fill their vessels in preparation for the Day of 'Arafa.

However, the most distinguished and significant day of these ten days of Dhul Ḥijja is the Day of 'Arafa which is considered amongst the most important days of the year. There are various reports as to how this day acquired its name. One report is that on this day, God presents (*yu'arrifu*) his worshipful servants to His angels and exalts them. Another report is that this was the day that Adam  became reunited (*ta'arrafa*) with his wife Ḥawwa.

The Day of 'Arafa is a day of immense significance to the Muslim community. In it, Muslims are reminded of the many blessings bestowed upon them by God, including their brotherhood and their dissimilarity to divided peoples who possess neither bonds of unity nor a common belief system that brings their hearts together. They are also reminded of the completion of the Qur'an and the fulfillment of God's blessings upon them, as it was on the Day of 'Arafa that the verse, "This day, I have completed your religion, and have fulfilled my favor upon you and have chosen Islam as your religion, [*al-Mā'ida: 3*]" was revealed.



In regards to the merits of this day, the Messenger of God  said: "There is no day more venerable to God than the Day of 'Arafa. God descends to the Heavens of the earth and exalts the people of the earth to the inhabitants of the Heavens. He says: 'Look at my servants [as they are] disshelled, dustied, and fatigued. They have come from every far off corner of the earth. They have not witnessed my mercy and they have not witnessed my punishment. And I do not see a day in which more people are saved from the Hellfire than the Day of 'Arafa.'"³ And in another transmission it is worded, "You

³ *Majma' al-zawā'id*: vol.iii/p.253.

have come to me disshelved, dustied, and fatigued from every far off corner of the earth. Bear witness that I have forgiven you [all].”⁴

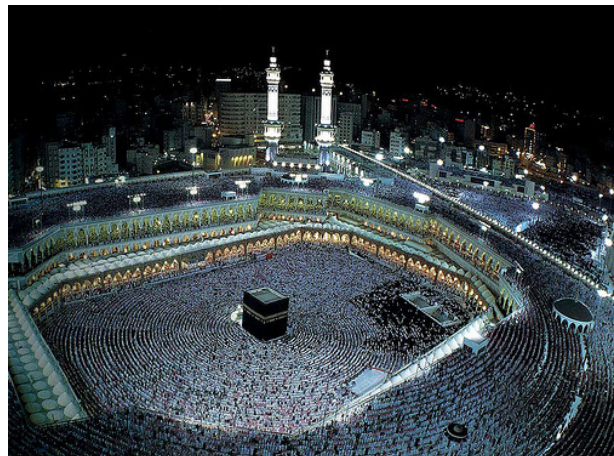
It is reported on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه saying: “The Messenger of God ﷺ said: ‘When the evening of ‘Arafa arrives, nobody with a mustard seed’s weight of faith (*imān*) in their hearts is left, except that they are forgiven.’” It was said: ‘O Messenger of God, is this restricted only to the people on ‘Arafa?’ He said: ‘No, it is for all of the Muslims.’”⁵

“The fast on the Day of ‘Arafa is counted by God as a [source of] expiation [for sins] that came the year before and the year after it.”

Meanwhile on this day, in the midst of all of these spiritual openings and the cascade of divine mercy, the devil is in the ultimate state of humiliation and disgrace. It is reported on the authority of Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Karīz رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of God ﷺ said: “The Devil has not been seen more abased, repelled, humiliated, and furious than on the Day of ‘Arafa. This is due to what he has seen from the descent of [divine] mercy and God’s forgiveness of grave sins. With the exception to what he was shown on the Day of Badr.”

It was said: “And what did he see on the Day of Badr, O Messenger of God?” He said: “He saw Jibrīl preparing the angels [for war].”⁶

From among the commendable acts on this day is fasting (for the non-pilgrim), and being abundant in supplication, remembrance (*adhkār*), particularly in repeating *lā ilāh illa Allāh* with sincerity and contemplation. The Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to fast and engage in remembrance by citing their merits and significance. It is related on the authority of Abī Qatāda رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of God ﷺ said: “The fast on the Day of ‘Arafa is counted by God as a [source of] expiation [for sins] that came the year before and the year after



⁴ *Shu‘ab al-Imān li-l-Bayhaqī*. vol.iii, Bāb 25/4068.

⁵ *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id*. vol.iii/p.252.

⁶ *Al-Muwatta‘*: p.291/ *Kitāb al-hajj-jāmi‘ al-hajj*.

it.”⁷ And on the authority of ‘Ā’isha رضي الله عنها the Prophet ﷺ used to consider fasting the Day of ‘Arafa as fasting one thousand days.⁸

It has also been reported on the authority of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه saying: “The Messenger of God ﷺ said: ‘The most abundant supplication of mine and supplication of the Prophets who came before me on ‘Arafa was: *lā ilāha illa Allāhu waḥdahu lā sharīka lahu, lahu-l mulk wa lahu-l ḥamd, wa huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr* (there is no god but God, the One Who has no partners, to Him is the dominion and to Him is [our] gratitude, and he is All-Powerful over all things).”⁹ Also it has been transmitted on his رضي الله عنه authority saying, “The best supplication is the supplication of the Day of ‘Arafa. And the best of what I have said and what the Prophets before me have said is: *lā ilāha illa Allāhu waḥdahu lā sharīka lahu.*”¹⁰ This pertains both to the pilgrim and the non-pilgrim.

As for the hadiths regarding the merits of fasting on the Day of ‘Arafa, they are intended for the non-pilgrim since the person performing the Ḥajj is forbidden to fast. This is to ensure that he preserves his energy to perform the rites of pilgrimage in the best fashion as well as to worship and supplicate rigorously on this rare opportunity. This is also reflective of the realism and moderation with which the great Islamic tradition has been endowed.

⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: vol.ii/ *Kitāb al-ṣiyām* 13-*bāb* 36/h.196.

⁸ *Majma‘ al-zawā‘id*: vol.iii/p.189.

⁹ *Al-Sunan al-kubrā li-l Bayhaqī*: vol.v/p.117.

¹⁰ *Al-Muwatta‘*: p.291/ *Kitāb al-ḥajj-jāmi‘ al-ḥajj*.